

October 12, 2010

News Release

For Immediate Release

Urban Chicken Procedures, Contact Info

Following City Council's approval of an urban chicken ordinance on Oct. 4, the City would like to remind residents of rules laid out in the ordinance, as well as procedures to follow in the case of stray or deceased fowl.

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department will be responsible for enforcing the ordinance related to the animals themselves, including the number of birds, at-large animals, odors and abuse or neglect. Animal impoundment requirements are the same as that for cats and dogs. Impoundment fees are \$31 for the first day, plus \$10 each day or partial day thereafter. Shelter fees are required at time of pickup. Payment can be in cash, with debit card or with credit card. No coins, please. Applicable tickets will be issued at time of pickup.

There is a \$20 fee for any animal dropped off at the Springfield-Greene County Health Department Animal Shelter. If a citizen is in possession of a stray chicken, Animal Control officers will come pick up the chicken for free, but they will not search for reported strays. Chicken carcasses may be discarded as trash.

The City's Building Development Services Department will be responsible for enforcing the ordinance related to requirements for chicken enclosures and distances. BDS also will investigate reports of roosters or other fowl.

The number to call for complaints is the City's main service request line at (417) 864-1010.

The Health Department has posted links on its website to a number of resources for those interested in establishing a safe residential chicken flock. The information comes from the University of Missouri Extension, and includes articles on disease prevention, egg safety, and managing a flock. Visit www.springfieldmo.gov/health for more information.

The new rules addressing the keeping of urban chickens are found under subsection 1-1331 of the Zoning Ordinance and under section 18-24 of the City Code. Highlights of the new rules include:

- Six hens is the maximum number allowed per tract of land regardless of the number of dwelling units.
- No roosters.
- No breeding or fertilizer production for commercial purposes.
- No at-large (free roaming) chickens allowed. Must be kept in an enclosure or fenced area at all times. Chickens shall be secured in a henhouse or chicken tractor during non-daylight hours.
- Enclosures must be kept in a clean, dry, odor-free, neat and sanitary condition at all times so as not to cause odor or noise problems with neighbors. Enforcement is complaint-based.
- Enclosures must be located no closer than three feet from property line and at least 25 feet from another residence or business.
- Enclosures must provide adequate ventilation and adequate sun and shade and must be impermeable to rodents, wild birds and predators, including dogs and cats.

- Enclosures shall only be located to the rear of the dwelling or other main structure and may be located in the rear yard as required by the zoning code.
- The chicken owner shall take necessary action to reduce the attraction of predators and rodents and the potential infestation of insects and parasites.
- Chickens found to be infested with insects and parasites that may result in unhealthy conditions to human habitation may be removed by an animal control officer.
- The chicken owner must provide for the storage and removal of chicken manure. All stored manure shall be covered by a fully enclosed structure with a roof or lid over the entire structure. No more than three cubic feet of manure shall be stored. All other manure not used for composting or fertilizing shall be removed.
- Any violation of the ordinance that constitutes a health hazard or that interferes with the use or enjoyment of neighboring property is a nuisance and may be abated under the general nuisance abatement provisions of the city.
- Each day that a violation continues is a separate offense.

Media inquires – contact: Mike Brothers, Department of Public Information, (417) 864-1119.